

# TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 18, 1999**

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## **NEW AREA CODE FOR (423) RESIDENTS; TRA TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT**

**NASHVILLE --** Residents of East Tennessee are being asked to attend a public meeting to give feedback on a plan that will assign a new Area Code to the region of the state currently served by area code (423).

The public meeting is being sponsored by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA), and will be held on Monday, February 22, 1999 from 7-8PM at the Andrew Johnson Building, 912 South Gay Street, in the Knox County School Board Room.

"The (423) area code in East Tennessee is approaching the point of exhaustion, and we want to explain to consumers the reasons behind this occurrence, and more importantly, give them a public forum to get feedback on the area code alternatives that they feel would best serve them," says Eddie Roberson, Chief of the TRA's Consumer Services Division.

There are two alternatives that will be presented in Thursday's public meeting. The first option is called "The Overlay Method." Under this method, a new area code would be superimposed over the existing area, and would be implemented as the existing area code is consumed.

"This method is gaining acceptance, but it would be a major change in the way the public dials local numbers," says Roberson. "10-digit dialing for local calls would be necessary under this plan."

The second plan would involve splitting the (423) area code area into two distinct calling areas.

Under the "Split" option, Knox County and all counties bordering Knox County would have one area code while the rest of East Tennessee would have a another area code. Under this plan, 7-digit dialing would be maintained.

However, Roberson is careful to point out that no decision has been made as to what plan would be implemented where.

"The purpose of the public meetings is to gauge public sentiment. Afterwards, we will report our findings to the TRA directors and make the necessary recommendations."

The area code relief plan will be implemented sometime during the second quarter of 1999.

This is the second of three public meetings sponsored by the TRA. The first meeting was held last week in Chattanooga. The third and final public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 23, in the Tri-Cities.

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